

## **Senate Concurrent Resolution No. 29**

### **RESOLUTION CHAPTER 24**

Senate Concurrent Resolution No. 29—Relative to California Autism Awareness Month.

[Filed with Secretary of State May 24, 2011.]

#### **LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST**

SCR 29, Pavley. California Autism Awareness Month.

This measure would designate April 2011 as California Autism Awareness Month, would affirm the Legislature's commitment to the important issues related to autism spectrum disorders (ASDs), would emphasize that each and every individual with an ASD is a valued and important member of our society, would recognize and commend the parents and relatives of individuals with ASDs for their sacrifice and dedication in providing for the special needs of individuals with ASDs, would recognize and commend the work of all nonprofit organizations that are contributing to the well-being of individuals with autism and their families, would stress the need to identify children with ASD and begin early intervention services immediately after a childhood diagnosis, and would stress the need for these intervention services, as well as supports, for individuals with ASDs and their families in an integrated, seamless, comprehensive, and competent manner that is delivered across the child's lifespan.

WHEREAS, Autism spectrum disorders (ASDs) now impact one out of every 110 children, and one in every 70 boys, in the United States and are the fastest growing serious developmental disability, making these disorders more common than pediatric cancer, diabetes, and acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS) combined; and

WHEREAS, The prevalence of autism is increasing by 10 to 17 percent annually and ASDs cost the nation over \$35 billion per year, and is estimated to exceed \$200 billion in 10 years; and

WHEREAS, Most school districts in California have seen a doubling of students with ASDs in the past five years. The number of Californians with ASDs who are served by the State Department of Developmental Services now exceeds 50,000, which is a number that has increased fivefold since 1998, and is more than 12 times what it was in 1987; and

WHEREAS, Many Californians are not adequately informed about ASDs and the value and importance of early identification, assessment, and treatment of these disorders; and

WHEREAS, Current scientific research demonstrates that the early identification of and intervention with children with ASDs can result in significant positive outcomes in many children with ASDs; and

WHEREAS, The Legislature supports the goal of increasing research to learn the root causes of autism and identify the best methods of early intervention and treatment, expanding programs for individuals with autism across their lifespan, and promoting understanding of the special needs of people with autism; and

WHEREAS, Parents and family members have made invaluable contributions through their commitment, care, and advocacy, to important advances in research, education, and treatment for individuals with ASDs; and

WHEREAS, Public information and awareness efforts are of paramount importance in accelerating early identification efforts and the proliferation of early intervention programs and services; and

WHEREAS, The Senate Select Committee on Autism and Related Disorders has appointed regional autism taskforces that are comprised of consumers and their family members, advocates, providers, researchers, and other experts in the area of ASDs, and other stakeholders, to provide assistance to, and to support the work of, the select committee. Senator Steinberg, as Chair of the Senate Select Committee on Autism and Related Disorders, has established the Statewide Coordinating Council of Autism Taskforces that consists of the leadership of the regional autism taskforces and has provided input and integrated recommendations for consideration by the Senate Select Committee on Autism and Related Disorders; and

WHEREAS, California has been the established leader in providing services and support for the early identification, assessment, intervention, education, and treatment of individuals with ASDs. This leadership began with the passage of landmark state legislation, such as the Lanterman Developmental Disabilities Services Act in 1969 and Assembly Bill 3854 (Chapter 1527 of the Statutes of 1974), relating to autism and public education; and

WHEREAS, In 2007, the Legislative Blue Ribbon Commission on Autism submitted its report, “An Opportunity to Achieve Real Change for Californians with Autism Spectrum Disorders,” which provided specific findings and recommendations; and

WHEREAS, In 2009, the Senate Committee on Rules, pursuant to Senate Rule 12.5, established the Senate Select Committee on Autism and Related Disorders and this committee has appointed regional autism taskforces; now, therefore, be it

*Resolved by the Senate of the State of California, the Assembly thereof concurring,* That the Legislature designates April 2011 as California Autism Awareness Month, affirms the Legislature’s commitment to the important issues related to ASDs, and emphasizes that each and every individual with an ASD is a valued and important member of our society; and be it further

*Resolved,* That the Legislature recognizes and commends the parents and relatives of individuals with ASDs for their sacrifice and dedication in providing for the special needs of individuals with ASDs; and be it further

*Resolved*, That the Legislature recognizes and commends the work of all of the nonprofit organizations that are contributing to the well-being of individuals with autism and their families; and be it further

*Resolved*, That the Legislature stresses the need to identify children with ASDs and to begin early intervention services immediately after a child has been diagnosed with autism; and be it further

*Resolved*, That the Legislature also stresses the need to provide these intervention services, as well as supports, for individuals with ASDs and their families in an integrated, seamless, comprehensive, and competent manner that is delivered across the child's lifespan; and be it further

*Resolved*, That the Secretary of the Senate transmit copies of this resolution to the author for appropriate distribution.